

## ELIJAH AND A SHEPHERD: THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION<sup>1</sup>

It has often been the case in Jewish tradition that books have been attributed to figures who, we can be almost certain, never wrote them.<sup>2</sup> We find this to be the case in the post-biblical era where books in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are attributed to biblical figures such as Enoch and Ben Sira, the latter supposedly the son of the prophet Jeremiah.<sup>3</sup> This tradition continues after the destruction of the Second Temple with works such as the *Sefer ha-Razim* (Book of Secrets) attributed to Adam, and the *Book of Creation*, a seminal work for the emerging schools of Kabbalah of the late twelfth century onwards, attributed in some early manuscripts to the forefather Abraham.<sup>4</sup>

A similar trait reappears from the late twelfth century in mystical works which are attributed to important figures of the early centuries AD. These figures were Rabbis whom tradition linked with the reception and transmission of mystical teachings. The most prevalent examples are the *Sefer ha-Bahir* (Book of Clarity) attributed to Nehuniah ben ha-Qannah, and the central work of medieval Kabbalah, the *Zohar* (Book of Splendour) attributed to Simeon bar

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<sup>1</sup> This article is dedicated with deep gratitude to Charles Lohr on the occasion of his 70th birthday for all the help, encouragement and friendship afforded to one just starting out.

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that this method of pseudepigraphical attribution started with the Greeks. See D.P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1972), pp. 1-21.

<sup>3</sup> See R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1913), especially volume 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Sefer Yezira* is also found attributed to the Rabbi of the second century C.E., Akiba b. Joseph. Any attempt to date this work is problematic as the text was probably in a fluid state for many hundreds of years. It is possible that the earlier versions attributed it to Abraham, harking back to the Bible, while the later versions saw Rabbinic attribution as more useful. See Moses Cordevero, *Pardes Rimonim* (Jerusalem, 1962), 1:4. See also G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 23-8.

Yohai, both central figures of second century Jewish historiography in Palestine.<sup>5</sup>

Again, in the late twelfth century another interesting phenomenon resurfaces which, as we shall see, is closely interrelated with pseudepigraphical attribution of works. This is the *giluy Eliyahu*, or the revelation of Elijah, the prophet who, as is recounted in the Bible, did not die but ascended alive to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). The author of a work himself, or more frequently one of his disciples, would claim that the contents of the work were a result of revelation by Elijah.

It is of great importance that almost always the work in question is not what would be called mainstream. In one way or another, the work introduces ideas which are seemingly radical and which do not have a strong basis in the accepted corpus of revealed knowledge. To be more concrete, the Pentateuch is considered by most Jews to be the word of God revealed to Moses on Sinai. It is the highest authority and cannot be questioned. Thus, anything which seems to stray from the parameters of truth laid down in the Pentateuch is immediately considered to be of heretical nature and generally shunned. The Halachah, or legalistic literature, takes as its basis the Pentateuch and builds or expands on the precepts already set out in it. It does not question or undermine the very fundamental basis of the divine revelation nor does it seek to claim for itself a place on a par with that original revelation. Hence, the legalistic argumentation that we find in the Mishnaic, Talmudic and Midrashic literature accepts as its ultimate source, and as the last court of appeal, the authority of the divinely revealed text.

However, the pseudepigraphical works seek to embellish and add to the authoritative text by filling in what seem to be the missing gaps, especially with regard to the essence of the Godhead itself and the nature of both creation and man's existence in this world. These are issues which are only briefly touched upon in the Pentateuch, if at all, and at certain times man has felt the need to metaphorically tap into the Divine gnosis in order to provide answers. This material is immediately suspect because it does not respect the boundaries of knowledge in the authoritative revealed text, but seeks to go beyond it to reveal an even greater, more sublime knowledge. A good example is the *Book of Creation*, which, at least in the manner the text was understood by its medieval interpreters, sought to provide a framework for the process of creation in order to better understand the relationship between the Creator and the created, as

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<sup>5</sup> On the Bahir, see G. Scholem, *Das Buch Bahir, ins Deutsche uebersetzt und kommentiert* (Leipzig, 1923), which is his doctoral dissertation, and D. Abrams, *The Book Bahir: An Edition Based on the Earliest Manuscripts* (Los Angeles, 1994). For a broad introduction to the Zohar, see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem, 1941), pp. 156-243.

well as the internal activity of that Creator. What this work revealed was a progression towards creation within the Godhead that was not to be found in any shape or form in the creation narratives of the Book of Genesis. While the work obviously respected the revealed text, in that it did not contradict or question its authority, it went beyond the text seeking to clarify and complement issues regarding the Creator and created not dealt with in the authoritative text.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that because of the suspect nature of the material in these works, some sort of authority had to be found in order to allow them to enter the mainstream and be accepted as orthodox. In the case of the immediately post-biblical works, the natural figures of authority were those of the Bible with whom God had established direct contact as revealed in that authoritative text. For the medieval authors, the figures of greatest authority were those accepted by all as legitimate explicators of the Divine law as revealed in the Bible: the Rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud. The attribution, therefore, of a given work to the teaching of an authority carried with it the suggestion that it contained information divinely inspired and was not the invention of a «nobody», all of which helped clear the way for its acceptance into mainstream Judaism.

The «revelation of Elijah» in the late twelfth century fits into this pattern as well. Elijah, from an early stage in Rabbinic literature, came to be considered as the harbinger of the Messiah, and as a messenger from God who appeared at different moments in history to certain deserving figures in order to reveal the Divine message and to act as arbitrator in difficult issues.<sup>7</sup> Elijah was accepted as a figure of authority and as one whose teachings were sacrosanct. It was probably this that motivated certain figures in the late twelfth century to adopt him as the source for their teachings.

What becomes evident is that the content of these works, without the authority of revelation, would have certainly been considered questionable, if not unorthodox, by the author's contemporaries. The nature of most of this material was indeed radically different from what preceded it, as it sought to redress the balance between the Creator and the created, undermined by a rationalistic philosophical approach to Judaism which had slowly become accepted as mainstre-

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the commentary to *Sefer Yezira* by Isaac the Blind, published by G. Scholem as an appendix to *Ha-Kabbalah be-Provence* (Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 1-18; Azriel of Gerona's commentary in C.H. Chavel, *Kitvey ha-Ramban*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1964), Vol. I, pp. 453-61; Nahmanides' commentary published by G. Scholem, *Kiryat Sefer* 6:3 (1930) pp. 401-10; and the long commentary of Joseph b. Shalom Ashkenazi (in the printed editions attributed to the Rabad (the acronym for Abraham ben David of Posquières) in *Sefer Yezirah ha-Meyuhas le-Abraham Avinu* (Jerusalem, 1990), among others.

<sup>7</sup> See the long and detailed introduction by M. Friedmann (Ish Shalom), *Seder Eliyahu Rabba ve-Seder Eliyahu Zuta* (Jerusalem, 19602, in Hebrew), pp. 1-44, where the Biblical sources and Rabbinic literature are scoured for mentions of Elijah and his different tasks. See also L. Ginzburg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1913), vol. 4, pp. 217-23.

am orthodoxy. These authors wish to introduce a level of knowledge which was not self evident from the traditional authoritative text and its commentaries, in order to bridge a gap which they felt had become misrepresented, misinterpreted and misleading.

Ramon Llull (c. 1232-1316) also claimed that his work was the result of revelation. In 1311, before the council of Vienne, Llull dictated a selective biography to some Carthusian monks. The *Vita coetanea* purported to set out the train of events that had caused Llull to abandon the life of a courtier in order to become a *vir phantasticus* convinced that his Art was the key to the truth. The *Vita* also set forth what Llull considered to be his life goals; to die as a martyr while converting the unbelievers, to write books against the errors of the unbelievers, and to establish monasteries where the necessary languages could be studied. It is clear, as C. Lohr has suggested, that this work was not truly a biography, since it was probably written for propaganda purposes to attract support for his ideas at the council, but at the same time it reveals much that would otherwise be unknown about Llull's development.<sup>8</sup> In the *Vita* Llull recounted how he received divine illumination («quod subito Dominus illustravit mentem suam») on Mt. Randa by which he understood how to write books «contra errores infidelium».<sup>9</sup> Having written the books in the monastery of La Real, he returned to Mt. Randa where he constructed a hermitage, remaining there for the following four months praying that God should grant the success of the Art. Then comes the following:

Dum igitur ipse staret sic in eremitorio memorato, venit ad eum quidam pastor ovium, adolescens, hilaris facie et venusta, dicens sibi sub una hora tot et tanta bona de Deo et de caelestibus de angelis scilicet et de aliis, quot et quanta, ut sibi videbatur, unus quicumque alius homo vix per duos dies integros fuisset locutus.

Vidensque pastor ille libros Raimundi, deosculatus est eos flexis genibus, lacrimis suis rigans eosdem. Dixitque Raimundo, quod per illos libros multa bona Christi ecclesiae provenirent.

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<sup>8</sup> See C. Lohr's introduction to the *Vita coetanea* in R. Imbach et M-H Méléard, eds., *Philosophes Médiévaux: Anthologie de textes philosophiques (XIIIe - XIVe siècles)* (Paris, 1986), pp. 209-22, esp. 213-14, and F. Domínguez Reboiras, «Idea y estructura de la "Vita Raymundi Lullii"», *EL* 27 (1987), pp. 1-20. For further biographies of Llull, see A. Pasqual, *Vindiciae Lullianae* (Avignon, 1778), vol. I; E. Longpré, «Lulle, Raymond» in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, IX, 1 (Paris, 1926), cols 1072-1141; M. Batllori, *Ramon Llull en el món del seu temps* (Barcelona, 1960); E.W. Platzeck, *Raimund Lull, sein Leben, seine Werke, die Grundlagen seines Denkens*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf, 1962-4); J.N. Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth Century France* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 1-134; A. Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1985), 1, pp. 3-52 among others [henceforth SW].

<sup>9</sup> *ROL* VIII, p. 280 (par. 14).

Benedixit etiam pastor ille Raimundo multis benedictionibus, tamquam propheticis, signans caput et totum corpus eius signaculis sanctae crucis, et recessit.

Raimundus vero, considerans haec omnia, mirabatur; nam pastorem illum numquam ipse viderat alias, nec de ipso audiverat quidquam loqui.<sup>10</sup>

This passage contains many interesting elements, not least the image of the unknown shepherd boy with the cheerful countenance who was able to reveal to Llull more in an hour than an ordinary person would have been capable of in two days. It is obvious that the knowledge Llull received was of a nature that could not have been revealed to him by another human being. Immediately noticeable is that this revelation is different from previous ones mentioned in the *Vita*, the first being the appearance of Christ on the cross, and the other, the sudden illumination giving him the form and method for the Art.<sup>11</sup> It is also clear that in retrospect Llull wanted to assert that this had been a divine revelation in the form of a shepherd boy. This becomes clear mainly by the way Llull describes the actions of the shepherd towards both him and his books, and the addition at the end of the passage that no one else had known or seen the shepherd. The shepherd, as a messenger from God, revealed to Llull secrets regarding the essence of the Godhead as well as of the heavens and the divine angelic orders and also, more importantly, gave what Llull took to be divine approval for his books.

Who was the shepherd and how did Llull know that this «adolescens» was indeed a shepherd? It would not be unreasonable to assume that Llull would have thought of revelation in terms of biblical imagery. The image of the shepherd as the benevolent leader, guide and teacher is well attested in both the Old and New Testaments, from Jacob tending the sheep of Laban, through Moses who receives revelation while a shepherd, to David's taking care of the sheep as a prelude to kingship, and Jesus as shepherd of the flock. It is likely that Llull

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<sup>10</sup> *ROL* VIII, p. 281 (par. 15). The Catalan version, considered by scholars to be later than the Latin, elaborates slightly more, especially with regard to the blessing given to Llull by the Shepherd. «E de fet, estant lo dit reverend mestre en aquesta forma e manera, esdevenc-se que un jorn li venc un pastor d'ovelles jove, ab la cara molt placent e alegre, lo qual dins una sola hora li recontà tanta singularitat de l'essència divina e del cel, e singularment de natura angèlica, com un gran home de ciència en dos dies haguera poscut explicar; e, veent lo dit pastor los dits llibres que lo dit reverend mestre havia ordonat, besà'ls ab los genolls en terra, e ab làgremes dix que per aquells llibres se seguiria molt de bé en l'Església de Déu; e, beneint al dit reverend mestre ab lo senyal de la creu, així com si fos un gran profeta, parti's d'ell, e romàs lo dit reverend mestre tot esbalaït, car no li donà de parer que mai hagués vist lo dit pastor, e d'aquell mai hagués oït parlar» See *OE* I, p. 39, par. 15, and the comments accompanying the text.

<sup>11</sup> *ROL* VIII, p. 273 (pars. 2-4) and p. 275 (par. 6).

had all these in mind, especially the last two, since he would have been well aware of the tradition regarding the genealogy of Jesus and that, according to Jewish tradition, the future Messiah will be of the seed of David.

It has been suggested that this episode is similar to that experienced by Joachim of Fiore when a «vir forma pulcherrimus» offered him a jug of wine, the drinking of which pertained to the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Yet the tradition of an external visitation to reveal secrets regarding the divine realm is generally not well attested in either the Christian or Muslim traditions, and therefore, it is pertinent to seek a cultural and historical context within which to understand Llull's use of this motif. E. Underhill has pointed out that, for most mystics, revelation is what occurs spiritually or immediately, within the «seeing self», and not as an external experience which is by nature suspect.<sup>13</sup> The dream was considered the normal medium of prognostication with different levels of revelation, although these were also viewed with some suspicion.<sup>14</sup> Albert the Great, in his commentary on Aristotle's *De divinatione per somnum*, compiled a hierarchy of thirteen visionary experiences varying in clarity and directness, the last five of which are waking visions, in other words, seen while the seer is awake. However, even the last one, in which «bona occulta» are revealed, does not encompass the actual appearance of a heavenly apparition, but rather reveals signs which present images and ideas which at best can be considered prophetic.<sup>15</sup> Hence, we do not generally find Christian mystics discussing physical visitations although they will tell about mystical truths revealed to them by both internal audition or visions.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly enough, Llull himself does not directly tackle the issue of revelation as described in the *Vita coetanea*. The closest he comes is when discussing the issue of dreams which he integrates into his hierarchy of the *scala naturae*, the highest of which, the revelation of truths by God to man, still occurs when the latter is asleep.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See A. Oliver, «El Beato Ramón Llull en sus relaciones con la Escuela Franciscana de los siglos XIII-XIV», *EL* 10 (1966), pp. 50-51, and A. Bonner, *SW* I, p. 23 n. 91.

<sup>13</sup> See her *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 266-297.

<sup>14</sup> See S.F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992) [henceforth *Dreaming*]. See also a review of the book by J.B. Russell in *Speculum* 69:3 (1994), pp. 818-19.

<sup>15</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Opera omnia*, A. Borgnet, ed., 38 vols (Paris, 1890-99), Vol. 9, pp. 191-93. See also S.F. Kruger, *Dreaming*, pp. 119-22.

<sup>16</sup> See S.F. Kruger, *Dreaming*, pp. 150-65, where he suggests that even accounts of external revelation should be viewed as being linked to the dreaming self. He refers to them as «real life» dreams.

<sup>17</sup> Ramon Llull, *Proverbis de Ramon*, ORL 14, pp. 213-15. The *scala naturae* appears in many of Llull's works such as *Felix* and *Arbre de ciència*. It is incorporated into the structure and alphabet of the Art in the ternary phase from the *Liber de praedicatione* onwards.



The same is true concerning Islam as well. Mystical revelation is internal and cannot constitute something new that was not revealed to the last prophet, Mohammed.<sup>18</sup> Ibn al 'Arabi wrote in the encyclopaedic *Futuhat al-makkiyya*, «We have declared it impossible that God should command anyone with a Shari'a by which he himself would worship or that he should send him with it to others. But we do not declare it impossible that God should teach him...through heralding visions... These are dream visions (ru'ya) seen by a Muslim or seen for him... In whichever state they occur [while awake or asleep], they are a dream-vision in imagination through sense perception, but not seen in the sensory realm». Ibn al 'Arabi then goes on to describe how this internal meeting actually takes place within the Sufi.<sup>19</sup>

It seems that given both Christian and Muslim suspicion of external visitation, Lull's claim for revelation should be seen in light of contemporary Jewish claims for just such revelation.<sup>20</sup> Around 1300, Kabbalistic sources emphasise the revelatory nature of contemporary esoteric teachings, and by doing so, seek to legitimize and give them authority. In *Sefer Maor va-Shemesh*, when discussing the issue of prayer and the blessings, Shem Tob ibn Gaon, a disciple of Solomon ibn Adret of Barcelona, wrote, «This is the rule regarding blessings and prayers that I received from mouth to ear all the way back to Rabbi Isaac, the son of the Rav, may his memory be blessed, and from the mouth of many who said about him that he was the third [to receive] from Elijah...». The passage continues to discuss the secrets revealed to Isaac by Elijah regarding which sefirah a person should direct his thoughts towards when reciting certain blessings.<sup>21</sup> This passage mentions the concept of the *giluy Eliyahu*, the revelation of Elijah, which clearly has to be seen as the legitimizing factor for what doctrines are subsequently enumerated. If Elijah revealed those teachings, then there

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<sup>18</sup> See S.H. Nassr, ed., «Introduction», and «The Quran as the Foundation of Islamic Spirituality», *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations* (New York, 1985), pp. xv-xxii, 3-10, respectively. This would already make Lull's claim for revelation impossible for any Muslim to accept, seeing as nothing new can be revealed. See N. Daniels, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford, 1993, rev. ed.), pp. 35-53, for medieval Christian understandings of revelation in Islam. This also makes doubtful S. Trías Mercant's attempt, in a fascinating study, to explain this visitation in a Muslim context of revelation experience. See S. Trías Mercant, «La ideología luliana de Miramar», *EL* 22 (1978), pp. 9-29, especially pp. 21-25.

<sup>19</sup> Vol. III, p. 38 (Bulaq, 1911). See W. C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York, 1989), pp. 261-3. See also W.C. Chittick, «Ibn 'Arabi and his School», *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations* (New York, 1991), pp. 49-79.

<sup>20</sup> It is of interest to note that Maimonides divides prophets into two groups: those who receive revelation in a dream and those who receive it in a vision. The first group is subdivided into five categories, the latter into four. One of the categories in both groups is «those who see a man and hear him addressing them». See Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago, 1963), 2:45.

<sup>21</sup> Shem Tob ibn Gaon, *Sefer Maor va-Shemesh* (Livorno, 1839), f. 35b.

can be nothing suspicious or heretical about them, even if, in this case, they discuss praying to different sefirot, which on a superficial level seems to contradict strict monotheistic belief.<sup>22</sup>

This revelation from Elijah was seen as the lowest level of divine revelation, followed, in ascending order, by: the *Bat Kol* or the heavenly (feminine) voice, which was both heard and in some way visualised by great sages and teachers who were close to the level of the biblical prophets; *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, or revelation by a holy spirit believed to be for the biblical prophets who did not achieve the level of prophecy of the forefathers; and finally the prophecy of Moses, who actually saw part of the essence of the divine. The revelation of Elijah was perceived to be beneath the lowest level of prophecy and more akin to the revelation of an angel with «malbush», the outward appearance of a man, to those not on a high enough level for more sublime and perfect revelation.<sup>23</sup> This was a more physical type of revelation and hence lower down on the scale.

The Kabbalists knew that they could not make claims for a higher level of revelation as the age of prophecy had long since passed, nor was there any real need to do so. Any revelation from Elijah, if it could be substantiated, would imply that the subsequent teachings were authoritative. The Kabbalists, at the start of the fourteenth century, laid claim for revelations by Elijah to the most important and distinguished family of Provençal Jewry: Abraham b. Isaac, head of the Rabbinical Court (d. ca. 1179); Abraham b. David of Posquières (d. 1198), better known by his acronym Rabad, who was Abraham b. Isaac's son in law; Jacob the Nazarite, a colleague of Rabad; and Rabad's son, Isaac the Blind (d. ca. 1232-6).<sup>24</sup> Menahem Recanati, in his commentary to the Pentateuch,

<sup>22</sup> See E. Gottlieb, «Nahmanides as a Kabbalist» (Hebrew), *Studies in the Kabbala Literature* (Tel Aviv, 1976), p. 89, where he suggests that Nahmanides' authority in Kabbalistic matters derived from the fact that he was a direct recipient of knowledge from Isaac the Blind who had revelation from Elijah.

<sup>23</sup> See *Be'ur le-Perush ha-Ramban al ha-Torah meyuhas le-Meir b. Shlomo ibn Sahula* (Warsaw, 1875), f. 8b-c. This supercommentary on the commentary of Nahmanides to the Torah has also been attributed to Joshua ibn Shu'aib, author of a large collection of sermons on the Torah. Both ibn Sahula and ibn Shu'aib were disciples of Solomon ibn Adret, the Barcelonian Rabbi and pupil of Nahmanides. See as well on the revelation to Elijah, the discussion in G. Scholem, «Religious Authority and Mysticism» in *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism* (New York, 1965), pp. 15-29. On the issue of the *malbush*, see D. Cohen Aloro, *The Secret of the Malbush and the Appearance of an Angel in the Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1987, in Hebrew), and E. Wolfson, «The Secret of the Garment in Nahmanides», *Da'at* 24 (1990) pp. XXV-XLIX.

<sup>24</sup> See Isaac of Acre, *Sefer Meirat Enayim*, Ms. Munich 17, f. 48b; See also Azriel of Gerona, *Perush al ha-Tefilot*, Ms. Halberstam 388, f. 19b. Isaac b. Jacob ha-Cohen, Ms. Cambridge Add. 505.2, mentions the revelation by Elijah in passing, talking about an anonymous Rabbi in Narbonne; See also the introduction to *Sefer ha-Kanah ve-hu Sefer ha-Peliah* (Koretz, 1784), f. IIb. See also regarding the Kabbalist Joseph della Reyna and his battle with Satan in *Sefer Likutei Shas le-Ari* (Livorno, 1790), ff. 55a-59a. The latter work also reveals how Elijah used to appear to Isaac Luria in Safed (f. 34c). Abraham Cohen



when discussing the priestly benediction, recounts, «...and the first commentary is that of Rabbi Isaac son of the Rabb, who received the revelation from Elijah (*giluy Eliyahu*), for he appeared to R. David, head of the council, and taught him the secrets of the Kabbalah, and these were passed on to his son Rabad, who also had revelation [from Elijah], and he passed the secrets on to his son Isaac the Blind, who was never able to see, and to him as well Elijah appeared, and he passed the tradition on to his two disciples, the one, R. Ezra, who commented on the Song of Songs, and the other, R. Azriel, and after them it was continued by Nahmanides». <sup>25</sup> A later Kabbalist, Shem Tob b Shem Tob, when discussing whether the highest sefirah, *Keter*, should be counted as one of the ten sefirot reports, «... and there is a tradition about some late Rabbis (*be-mikt-sat ha-aharonim*) that he [Elijah] would appear to the great Rabbi Abraham the Pious, head of the council, may his memory be blessed, and he [Abraham] received from him; and also the great Rabad, his son-in-law and man of great deeds, received from him [Elijah]; and also the pious Rabbi Isaac, whose teachings (*kabbalah*) are like the finest flour and very deep in the wisdom of Kabbalah». <sup>26</sup> It was from this circle that some of the most important Kabbalistic teachings emerged. Rabad was an important Rabbinic authority in southern European Jewry, and in order to demonstrate how his mystical teachings did not clash with his Halachic or legalistic rulings, the name of Elijah was evoked. Rabad himself claimed that he had received his knowledge via a holy spirit (*Ruah ha-Kodesh*) but by 1300 this was understood to imply the prophet Elijah. <sup>27</sup>

It seems clear that Lull was himself trying to create the same sort of aura around his own works by establishing their revelatory source and, hence, their ultimate authority. This claim for revelation, as well as the manner in which it was described, could have had appeal for both a Christian and non-Christian audience. In relation to the council of Vienne, for which the *Vita coetanea* was written, it is possible that Lull surmised that his claim for divine revelation and approval would work in his favour when making his requests, and would allow

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Herrera reports the tradition in his *Sefer Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (Warsaw, 1864), section 4, ch. 8. See also A. Jellinek, *Auswahl kabbalistischer Mystik* (Leipzig, 1853), pp. 4-5 and G. Scholem, «The order of "Shimushei Rabba"», *Tarbiz* 16 (1945), pp. 196-209, and his *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, 1990), p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> Menahem Recanati, *Perush al ha-Torah* (Venice, 1545), f. 173d.

<sup>26</sup> Shem Tob b. Shem Tob, *Sefer ha-Emunot* (Ferrara, 1556, facsm. Farnborough 1969), f. 36b.

<sup>27</sup> See G. Scholem, *Reshit ha-Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1948, in Hebrew), pp. 66-98. It is interesting that the claims of revelation by Elijah are only made around 1300 and not by the aforementioned Rabbis themselves. Though here is not the place to discuss this, I would suggest that there was around 1300 an element of tension between different «schools» of Kabbalah regarding the authenticity of certain doctrines. This theme will be developed more comprehensively in my Ph.D thesis (see n. 29 below).

for the Art to be accepted as another authoritative method.<sup>28</sup> It is probable that Llull had considered that being able to claim divine revelation in the nature of a «revelation of Elijah» would help when presenting his Art to *infeels*, especially to the Jews who themselves made these claims regarding their mystical teachings.

In summation, the use of this theme in the *Vita coetanea* fits nicely with contemporary Kabbalistic claims for divine revelation. Although the shepherd is not named, and while it is clear that Llull had Christian imagery in mind, the parallels between this description of divine revelation and contemporary Jewish claims concerning the *giluy Eliyahu*, as profferers of authority, are enlightening. Llull's knowledge of Jewish thought and praxis has long been the subject of debate, concentrating mainly on issues regarding Llull's *dignitates Dei* and the Kabbalistic notion of the *sefirot*. While the issue discussed above is only a small aside in this complicated debate, I think that it only adds to what is becoming a considerable amount of evidence regarding Llull's utilisation of Kabbalistic ideas in his own system, adapting them so as to best demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith.<sup>29</sup>

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## RESUM

The article discusses the use of claims of divine revelation to give added authority and weight to the innovative material found in a particular work. Early Jewish mystical works are often attributed to important historical figures so as to give their content greater credence. It is suggested that Llull's description of revelation from a shepherd boy in the *Vita coetanea* reflects the same need as the claim for «revelation from Elijah» in Jewish mystical texts of the period, namely that of providing a greater authority for the teachings expressed in the works.

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<sup>28</sup> See the *Disputatio eremitae et Raymundi super aliquibus dubiis quaestionibus Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, MOG 4, p. 225, written in Paris where Llull emphasises the Art's divine revelation. See also A. Bonner, «L'art lul liana com a autoritat alternativa», *SL* 88 (1993), pp. 26-7, 30, and his discussion concerning the importance of revelation for Llull.

<sup>29</sup> This evidence is discussed more fully in my Ph.D thesis entitled *Judaism in Ramon Llull (1232-1316)*.